

Mr John Toon

*Honorary Fellow of the University
Conferring ceremony: 31 October 2014*

Citation

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present John Toon to you for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University of Sydney.

John Toon graduated with a Diploma in Architecture with Distinction from Leicester College of Art and Technology in 1954. Prior to doing his two years of National Service with the Royal Engineers, he worked with Sir Basil Spence, architect for Coventry Cathedral, in his Edinburgh office. After National Service he worked with the Planning Section of London County Council on the redevelopment of bombed areas such as St Pauls Precinct, the Barbican and East End housing.

On his appointment to a lectureship in Town and Country Planning at Sydney in 1960, he became active in community affairs and was a frequent lecturer on the University extension program. He was awarded a Leverhulme Teaching Fellowship in 1971 to teach at the newly established Urban Planning Program at the Institute of Technology at Bandung, Indonesia.

Following a distinguished career, John Toon retired from the University staff as an Associate Professor in 2005. He was the head of the Urban and Regional Planning program in the Faculty of Architecture for twenty years and was instrumental in fostering close links between the University and the Planning Institute of Australia. He acted as President of the NSW chapter of the Institute and was made a Life Fellow in recognition of his services. He also played an important role in helping to shape state planning policy in NSW, chairing the Ministers Advisory Committee from 1993-4. During his tenure as Director of the Planning Research Centre (a University Foundation at the time of his Directorship), he became acutely aware of the gap between the research needs in urban planning and the availability of research funds.

After his retirement, through a long professional association with Warren Halloran, a land developer, he began to promote the concept of establishing a research Trust at the University. This resulted in Warren making a donation of \$5 million to the University in 2012 to establish the Henry Halloran Trust, named in honour of his father, who was a strong advocate for town planning in the first half of the 20th Century.

John has been the central force in organising this generous gift. He initiated negotiations with the University, was a key author of the Trust Establishment Document that describes the objectives and governance of the Trust, and has become the key contact point between Mr Halloran and the University. His involvement has been driven by a passion for improving research at the University of Sydney and for using the vehicle of research to improve outcomes for urban and regional land management.

Since the Trust has been established he has been a key figure in its development. He is a member of the Advisory Board and is a key point of liaison between the Henry Halloran Trust and Warren Halloran. He has been instrumental in maintaining Mr Halloran's engagement with the University and for providing strategic advice to the Trust. He has been a driving force behind plans to increase the scale of the Trust. His vision of the Trust as an organisation which promotes a collaborative cross-disciplinary environment where established scholars can engage in leading-edge research relevant to Australian and international urban and regional land management is very much in alignment with the University's current strategic plan.

John Toon has made an outstanding contribution to the University throughout his professional life, pre and post retirement and is most deserving of this award.

Chancellor, I present John Toon and invite you to confer the title of Honorary Fellow of the University upon him.